AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1 to 10. (Canceled).

11. (New) A method for recognizing a visual obstruction using an image sensor associated with a vehicle, comprising:

analyzing an image recorded by an image sensor, wherein at least one of a presence and a type of a visual obstruction is determined by the analysis of the image, wherein the analysis includes measuring a blurriness of at least a portion of the image;

producing a signal which indicates one of the presence and the type of the visual obstruction.

12. (New) The method of claim 11, wherein the at least one of the presence and the type of the visual obstruction is determined by measuring a relative blurriness of different parts of the image.

13. (New) The method of claim 11, wherein the blurriness is measured based on one of a contrast spectrum of the image, a Fourier spectrum, and a autocorrelation function of the image.

14. (New) The method of claims 11, wherein the at least one of the presence and the type of visual obstruction is determined based on a measured distribution of the blurriness by comparison with reference distributions.

15. (New) The method of claim 11, wherein an analysis of at least one image recorded after an initial wiping operation on a windshield of a motor vehicle is used to determine whether to initiate a next wiping operation.

16. (New) The method of claim 15, wherein the determination regarding the next wiping operation is based on blurriness of a first image that was recorded immediately after the initial wiping operation in comparison to blurriness of an image recorded subsequent to the first image.

17. (New) The method of claim 11, further comprising:

turning on a windshield light if a scene has a contrast below a predetermined threshold.

18. (New) The method of claim 11, wherein the image sensor is focused on a region external to the vehicle.

19. (New) A device for identifying a visual obstruction, comprising:

an image sensor for recording an image; and

an evaluation unit for analyzing the image recorded by the image sensor;

wherein the evaluation unit outputs a signal that indicates at least one of a presence and a type of the visual obstruction based on the analysis of the image, wherein the analysis includes measuring a blurriness of at least a portion of the image.

20. (New) The device of claim 19, wherein the signal is used to control at least one of windshield wipers, windshield heating systems, and windshield washer systems.